

Madam Speaker:

I rise today to honor the memory of Zachary Cook, 2008 Texas A&M graduate, member of the Texas A&M ROTC, and Aggie Corps of Cadets.

Zachary died tragically yesterday in a helicopter crash on the A&M campus in College Station Texas in my district. It was during Rudder's Rangers Annual Winter Field Training. His loss brings a great sadness to his family and friends, the extended Texas A&M family, and the Army, all of us deprived of this patriotic citizen who was dedicated to serving our great nation in uniform.

Zachary dreamed of flying Army helicopters, and was thrilled to receive his recent Army commission. He was revered as a true friend to others, someone who truly inspired and mentored his friends.

I believe the families and loved ones of our servicemen and women are truly the unsung heroes and heroines in our nation's defense, and that is why I want to express my regret and respect to the family of Mr. Cook.

A grateful nation owes you a deep debt of gratitude, and our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time. I hope they take comfort in knowing that the spirit of service demonstrated by their loved one will touch and inspire the lives of others long after we are all

gone from this earth.

Our thoughts and prayers are also with the four Texas National Guard members who were seriously injured in the crash. We pray for their speedy recovery.

We humbly recognize that we can never repay fully Zachary or his family for their loss, but I hope that his family will know that our nation will never forget their sacrifice.

May God bless the spirit of Zachary Cook and keep him lovingly in his arms.